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RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 2009
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RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 0411

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C O R R E C T E D COPY: (1) ADDRESSEE (SECSTATE) ADDED,
(2) NAME CORRECTION IN PARAGRAPH 3

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [KV](#) [SR](#) [BU](#)
SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: SERBS TO BULGARIA: "DON'T
RECOGNIZE KOSOVO, AT LEAST DON'T BE FIRST"

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Jim Bigus for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

11. (C) On December 21 MFA West Balkans Director Tulechki briefed us on Bulgaria's recent Kosovo moves, starting with FM Kalfin's visit to Belgrade early the week of December 17. Kalfin met Tadic, Jeremic, Vice PM Jelic, but not any hardliners. The Serbs at first asked Bulgaria not to recognize Kosovo, then backed off and asked, "as a neighbor," at least not be among the first to recognize. Tadic asked Kalfin to be careful with the use of the word "independence" in public statements, which was why Kalfin stated publicly that Bulgaria would not recognize unilateral declaration of independence (and not saying it would recognize a coordinated declaration). Tadic was grateful for this formulation and said it would help him internally. The Serbs also discussed South Stream pipeline border crossing issues (the Bulgarians are pressing the Russians on where South Stream would exit Bulgarian territory). Belgrade also raised interest in building a nuclear power plant in Bulgaria that would provide power to Serbia. (Comment: This is the first we have heard of this.) The Serbs have the funds but the public is against having the plant in Serbia.

12. (C) For the tripartite meeting with Greece and Romania on Kosovo on December 22, Tulechki said the Greeks sent a draft joint statement calling for no change in borders and fast track/no conditions Serb EU membership. The Bulgarians struck the borders language, Tulechki said, calling it "language from the Helsinki time," and added conditions to the EU membership language. Tulechki said Political Director Poriazov, who was posted in Greece, "will convince them to change." (Note: In a separate meeting the PM's diplomatic advisor said that EU membership for Serbia should happen -- it's necessary for regional stability -- but it should not be given, the Serbs should earn it by meeting EU standards and conditions.)

13. (C) On Bulgaria's direct engagement with Kosovo, Tulechki said the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce will issue an invitation to its Kosovo counterpart, the Albanian Business Forum, to send a delegation to Sofia in early February to discuss Bulgarian assistance. The assistance will be small scale (trucks, generators) but Kosovars welcome it. The GOB is also talking with moderate Kosovo Serb Bishop Teodosije about Bulgarian assistance to renovate and restore Orthodox sites in Kosovo, which are in bad shape. Tulechki said the Bulgarians are experts at renovation and the Kosovo Serbs

will be grateful. FM will visit Pristina on January 27 and meet Thaci. The Kosovar parliament may be in session and if so, will likely invite Kalfin to address it. The Bulgarians will consider any such request very cautiously.

¶4. (C) Comment: The Bulgarians are maintaining their activism on Kosovo right through the holiday season, reflecting the depth of their concern. Kosovo is the likely first topic for FM Kalfin's meeting with the Secretary on January 4.

Beyrle